

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a listing of the claims in the application.

Claims 1-35 (Cancelled)

36. (currently amended) A process for producing bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or a low condensate thereof from an aromatic polyester, comprising the steps of:

heating the aromatic polyester comprising terephthalic acid as a main dicarboxylic acid component and ethylene glycol as a main glycol component together with bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or a low condensate thereof in an amount of 1 part by weight of the aromatic polyester and 0.1 to 4.5 parts by weight of the bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or the low condensate thereof in the absence of free ethylene glycol to ~~pre-decompose~~ decompose the aromatic polyester, and then,

reacting the ~~obtained pre-decomposed~~ decomposed product with ethylene glycol in an amount of 1 part by weight of the ~~pre-decomposed~~ decomposed product and 3.0 to 10.0 parts by weight of ethylene glycol to convert the terephthalic acid component of the ~~pre-decomposed~~ decomposed product into bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or a low condensate thereof, wherein each of said low condensates is a compound containing ethylene terephthalate as the main constituent component and has an average polymerization degree of 1 to 10.

37. (previously presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the pre-decomposition is carried out by heating the bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or low condensate thereof to melt.

38. (previously presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the pre-decomposition is carried out at a temperature of 150 to 265°C.

39. (currently amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the pre-decomposition is carried out using ~~0.1 to 4.5~~ 0.7 to 1.2 parts by weight of the bis- β -hydroxyethyl terephthalate and/or low condensate thereof based on 1 part by weight of the aromatic polyester.

40. (previously presented) The process of claim 1, wherein a reaction between the pre-decomposed product and ethylene glycol is carried out at a temperature of 190 to 265°C.

41. (previously presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the reaction between the pre-decomposed product and ethylene glycol is carried out using 1 part by weight of the pre-decomposed product and 3.0 to 5.0 parts by weight of ethylene glycol.